



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Nuclear Medicine DaTSCAN

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

Radiology Department

The York Hospital,
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Nuclear Medicine
Tel: 01904 725936

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About this leaflet

In this leaflet we tell you about the procedure known as a Nuclear Medicine DaTSCAN. We explain what is involved and what the possible risks are. The information in this leaflet is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your doctor, but can act as a starting point for such a discussion.

What is a DaTSCAN?

The DaT in DaTSCAN stands for dopamine active transporter. Dopamine is a chemical which is important in areas of the brain that help control movement. A DaTSCAN is a nuclear medicine scan that uses a radioactive tracer to look at the function of dopamine transporters in your brain. It is often used to help distinguish Parkinson's disease from other causes of tremor or difficulties with movement. It can also be used to give information about related conditions that can cause dementia.

Are there any alternatives?

There may be alternative imaging studies available. However, your doctor has decided this test is the most appropriate for you. If you have any concerns, please discuss them with the doctor who referred you to us.

What if I have any other questions?

If you have any worries or questions about your scan after reading this leaflet, please feel free to telephone us on 01904 725936 and we will be happy to talk to you.

What preparation is needed before the DaTSCAN?

For the DaTSCAN injection to work properly, it is necessary to stop your thyroid gland from absorbing the radioactive tracer. To do this, we will need to give you some tablets or liquid to swallow with water, an hour before you have your injection.

This medication contains iodine so if you are **allergic to iodine**, please let us know as soon as possible.

Please telephone us on 01904 725936 as soon as possible to let us know if you are able to attend your appointment. If you are taking any of the following drugs, please let us know when you telephone to confirm your appointment:

- Amfebutamone hydrochloride (Zyban)
- Amphetamines
- Benztropine
- Bupropion
- Cocaine
- Methylphenidate (Ritalin)
- Modafinil
- Phentermine, or Sertraline
- Mazindol

You may continue to eat and drink normally.

What happens during the DaTSCAN?

When you arrive at the Nuclear Medicine Department, a member of staff will explain the scan to you and they will give you two tablets or some liquid medicine to swallow with some water. This medication stops the injection going to your thyroid gland. Around an hour after you have had this medicine, you will be given an injection into a vein in your arm. The injection contains a small dose of a radioactive tracer, which is taken by the blood stream to your brain.

Evidence shows that we get the best quality images three hours after the injection, so you need to return to the Nuclear Medicine Department after three hours for your scan. In between the injection and scan you are free to leave the department and can continue to eat and drink as normal. A member of staff will let you know the exact time that you should return for your scan.

When you return for your scan, you will be asked to lie flat on your back with your head in a head rest. The scan is taken using a gamma camera that comes very close to your head, It is important that you keep very still for the duration of the scan. The scan takes around 35 minutes. **If you are unable to lie flat on your back for 35 minutes, please let us know as soon as possible.**

The scanning procedure is not painful, and you stay awake throughout.

What happens after the DaTSCAN?

After the scan you will be free to leave the Nuclear Medicine department and you can eat and drink normally.

Are there any risks or complications?

Nuclear Medicine procedures are very safe diagnostic imaging tests. Side effects from the radioactive tracers are extremely rare.

The amount of radioactivity involved is very small, and the doctor who asked us to do the test thinks that the benefits of having the scan outweigh any small risks. There is radiation in the air and ground all around us called background radiation. This scan gives you around two years' worth of background radiation

This scan is not recommended for pregnant women. If you are pregnant, or might be pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding, please let us know before your appointment.

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Results

You will not be given the results on the day of your scan. A report will be sent to the doctor who asked us to do the scan. They will then let you know the results.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Mrs J Hopkins, Radiology, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:
www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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